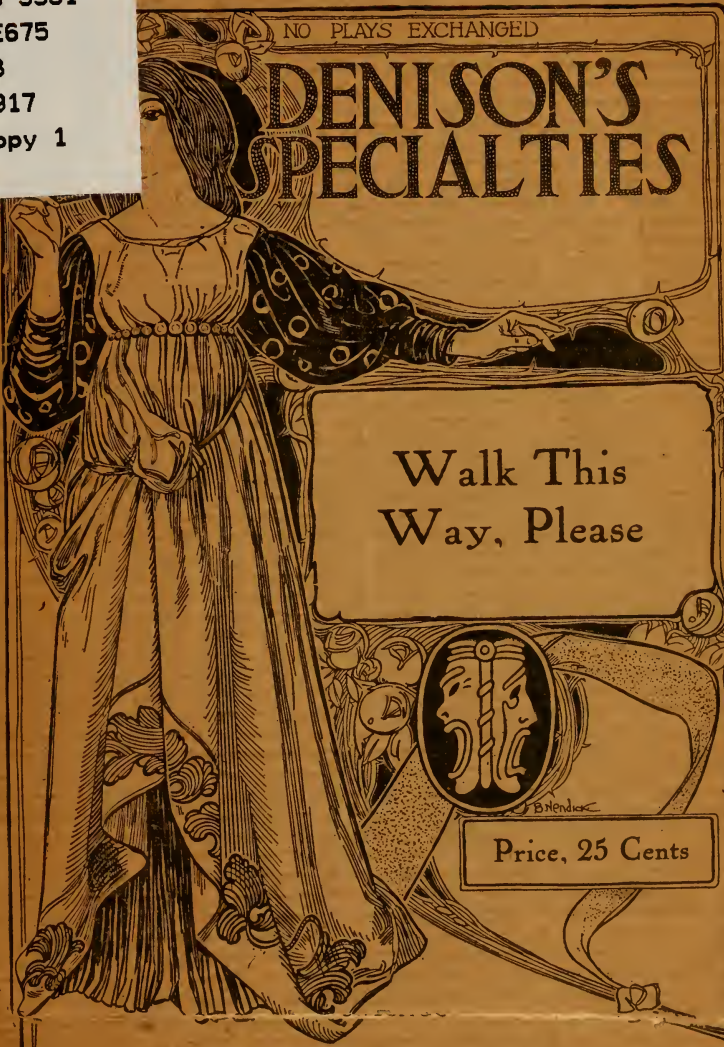


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T. S. DENISON & COMPANY, Publishers, 154 W. Randolph St., Chicago

WALK THIS WAY, PLEASE

A SATIRE ON SHOPPING

BY

SOPHIE HUTH PERKINS

AUTHOR OF

"Mirandy's Minstrels" and "The Colored Suffragettes."



CHICAGO

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

[1917]

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1917

WALK THIS WAY, PLEASE

INTRODUCING

LOTT A. COYNE *The Proprietor*
PETER HUDSON *A Customer*
GUSSIE SHANKS *The Floor Walker*
"SMOKE" JOHNSON *The Chauffeur*
BOBBIE *A Young Hopeful*
ROSIE SHAYNE }
SALLIE BRADY. } *Sales Girls*
MRS. POTTS INJAM *A Fussy Customer*
MRS. HIGHTOWER *A Shopper*
GERTRUDE *A Bride-to-Be*
DOROTHY *Pert and Pretty*
JOSIE.... }
MABEL... } *Models*
ANGIE... }
FLOSSIE.. }

NOTE: Bobbie and Dorothy may be given more to do, according to their capabilities. Or these parts may be eliminated without injury to the play's success.

SCENE—*A Department Store.*

TIME—*Today.*



PLACE—*Any City.*

PLAYING TIME—*About Fifty Minutes.*

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OCT 20 1917

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no. 1

COSTUMES AND CHARACTERS.

LOTT A. COYNE—A foppish, youthful and likable Englishman of the high-hat and monocle type. He is droll in speech and slightly eccentric in actions; lately come into money and invested it in the "smart shop" and general department store business, of which his knowledge is extremely limited. He wears same clothes throughout, featuring high-hat and monocle.

PETER HUDSON—A crabby old man, aged about sixty. Ruddy face, gray side whiskers and hair. Wears English walking suit, derby hat, gray silk gloves and walking stick. Is old but still has young ideas, and fond, perhaps, of the girls.

GUSSIE SHANKS—Strongly feminine in speech and actions. Wears extremely tight clothing, but withal a proper and dapper young man in his own estimation. "My dear, you should see him."

"SMOKE" JOHNSON—A droll young darkey. He is attired in chauffeur's uniform, leather leggings, etc.

ROSIE SHAYNE—Typical shop girl. The kind you have seen and always will see behind a counter. With her, gum-chewing is an indoor sport and the latest face make-up and hair-dress, an art.

SALLIE BRADY—Of the same brand, but in addition to the "crimes" mentioned in Miss Shayne's category, has added the agony of "keeping her hair on straight."

JOSIE, MABEL, ANGIE AND FLOSSIE—Four stunning, beautiful and modish young maidens. They have no lines in play and are selected because of their beauty and their ability to wear clothes. They are demonstrators of the last gasp in feminine creations.

MRS. POTTS INJAM—A matron of about forty. Wears handsome gown and highly cultivated manners. Her limousine is at the door and she doesn't care who knows it.

MRS. HIGHTOWER—One of our newly rich, aged about thirty. She tries to be swagger and dress accordingly, and

almost succeeds. Of course you know she has just returned from abroad.

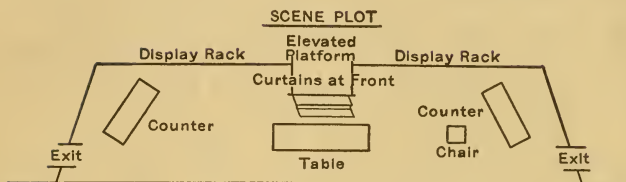
GERTRUDE—An extremely nervous young person, but pretty and stylish and therefore easily forgiven. She is shopping for a trousseau and has “such a time.” She might even have to go abroad for her outfit—one never can tell.

BOBBIE—About twelve years of age and has lived every minute of it. Somewhere he has a fond mama and papa, which means that he is allowed to roam at large in our store—which he does.

DOROTHY—A “perfect little lady” of ten or twelve. You know the kind. You observe her and then wonder “who brought her up.” Wears a fetching little frock and a dimpled smile, so perhaps you may like her after all.

NOTE TO PRODUCERS: “Walk This Way, Please,” is a smart little comedy as written, and may easily be adapted to musical comedy by the introduction of song numbers, *ad lib*, also by adding several more style models as a chorus. The stage setting and dressing are vastly important to make a successful production, and the possibilities for a stunning effect are unlimited with the idea conveyed in this vehicle. Your local shops may be called upon to supply you the latest modes in men’s and women’s apparel, for which credit on program may be given. More than four models for finale may be employed if available, but if more are used, quicker action in displaying them is suggested. The appearance of “Smoke,” instead of the expected girl, is a great punch finale and should not fail to evoke gales of laughter and applause.

SCENE PLOT.



LIST OF PROPERTIES.

Men's and women's wearing apparel in profusion.

Style charts and mode pictures to hang on wings and back drop.

Comedy hat with long feather for Coyne's business.

Roll of paper money for Coyne.

Shopping list for Gertrude.

Cigarette and silver case for Coyne.

WALK THIS WAY, PLEASE

SCENE: *A section in a department store. (See scene plot.) At back of stage are racks on which are displayed gowns, skirts, coats and general apparel for women. On counters R. and L. is a line of drygoods, gloves, handkerchiefs, jewelry, toilet articles, etc. Also two or three boxes of men's shirts and fancy haberdashery. On counter L. are two or three boxes of women's shoes. Table at C. is used for the display of millinery. At back C. is a raised platform, reached by two or three steps, and with draw-curtains at front for the display of the girl models at near finale.*

At rise ROSIE and SALLIE are discovered back of counters engaged in the arranging of goods on display. They move languidly about their tasks, ROSIE vigorously chewing on a wad of gum, while SALLIE pauses every few seconds to arrange hair-dress.

ROSIE (*yawns and stretches in exaggerated manner*). Oh, dear!

SALLIE. I'm not keeping you up, am I?

ROSIE. Subside, my dear; subside. (*Loftily.*) You may speak to me merely after I speak to you. You are not to intrude yourself upon my personality, Miss Brady. I shall soon fly far above you, socially and otherwise. Watch me fly, my dear. Watch me fly. (*Moves arms to imitate bird on wing.*)

SALLIE. Well, I never saw a bird yet that didn't have to come down to roost once in a while.

ROSIE. Ah, my dear, he smiled at me—actually smiled at me.

SALLIE. Who smiled at you?

ROSIE. Mr. Coyne.

SALLIE. Mr. Coyne, our new proprietor—he smiled at you?

ROSIE. Uh-huh!

SALLIE. I don't blame him. The first time I saw you I laughed right out loud.

ROSIE. Aw, you're jealous; or two-faced. That's it—you're two-faced.

SALLIE. Say, do you suppose if I had another face I'd be wearing this one?

ROSIE (*laughs*). Cheer up; maybe you'll be invited to my wedding.

SALLIE. Maybe I will, but I won't have to go.

Enter GUSSIE, R., followed by HUDSON.

GUSSIE (*effeminate walk and voice*). Walk this way, please.

HUDSON (*testily*). Say, I couldn't walk that way in a thousand years. (*Suddenly discovers the girls, prepares for flirtation.*)

GUSSIE (*to girls*). Have you seen Mr. Coyne in this part of the store this morning?

ROSIE. No, sir.

SALLIE. It's too early for him.

HUDSON. Too early? Eleven o'clock too early? I'm up every morning at seven.

SALLIE. So is Mr. Coyne, but only when he hasn't been to bed the night before.

GUSSIE (*to HUDSON*). You see, sir, Mr. Coyne is not particularly fond of business. But, otherwise, he's a lovely man.

ROSIE. Indeed he is.

HUDSON. I don't care how lovely he is. I came in to purchase some merchandise.

ROSIE, SALLIE and GUSSIE (*in chorus*). Certainly—delighted—charmed—

HUDSON (*interrupting*). But I prefer a human being to wait on me. (*To SALLIE.*) You're not a bad sort, young woman. But as for your friend there—(*indicating ROSIE*) her extreme cruelty to a stick of gum makes her an outlaw with me, commercially and socially.

ROSIE (*haughtily*). Sir!

HUDSON. After witnessing your expert mastication, it's easy to understand why gum manufacturers become millionaires. (*To GUSSIE.*) As for you, I give you a fond pooh-pooh. (*Lifts hat and kisses finger tips at SALLIE, then exits L. ROSIE gasps and SALLIE laughs.*)

GUSSIE. The scoundrel! I shall throw him out!

SALLIE. Too late, my hero. He's already out.

Enter from R., MRS. INJAM, MRS. HIGHTOWER, BOBBIE and DOROTHY. They come on ad lib. chatter and confusion.

MRS. H. (*as she enters*). Really, Mrs. Injam, the persons you come in contact with, in the shops nowadays is the height of something. You know, I don't believe I've met you since I returned from abroad.

MRS. I. Oh, you've been abroad? I hadn't heard. I suppose you saw the Dardanelles?

MRS. H. Oh, yes; we took dinner with them twice.

BOBBIE (*to MRS. H., indicating GUSSIE*). Oh, mama, look at the funny man.

MRS. I. (*reprovingly*). Hush, Bobbie. That isn't a man. That's a floor walker.

DOROTHY (*to MRS. I.*). Ask him something, mother. Maybe he can talk.

GUSSIE (*haughtily ignoring the children—to MRS. H.*). Are you looking for service, madam?

MRS. H. Certainly. What do you suppose we came in here for?

MRS. I. Did you ever hear of such impertinence!

GUSSIE. I beg your pardon, madam. I'm not myself today.

MRS. H. We don't care who you are, today or tomorrow.

DOROTHY. Oh, mother, he can talk, can't he?

MRS. I. (*to GUSSIE*). If you wish to make yourself useful, you may go down to the door and tell James—James is my chauffeur—tell James—you'll find him in a big blue limousine, silver trimmed, most completely equipped touring car ever imported—tell James to—that car cost a fabu-

lous sum, I can tell you—well, you run down and tell James, and please hurry, won't you?

GUSSIE (*bewildered*). Yes, yes, madam; but what shall I tell him?

MRS. I. Why, I've forgotten now: but run down and tell him something—clear out!

GUSSIE, *with hand to head, staggers dazedly off* R. BOBBIE and DOROTHY *begin to paw articles over on counters*. ROSIE and SALLIE *attempt to restrain them, but finally give up in despair*.

MRS. H. (*to ROSIE*). Young woman, I'm not certain whether I shall make a purchase today or not. But whether I do or not, you will please show me only the most expensive articles. Nothing but the most expensive. Understand?

ROSIE. Yes, ma'am. But whatta you want to look at?

MRS. H. (*haughtily*). That is no affair of yours, Miss—(*Gasps and SALLIE smothers a laugh.*)

MRS. I. (*to MRS. H.*). These shop persons are becoming more and more intolerable every day.

MRS. H. You are quite right, my dear Mrs. Injam. Nothing like the sales persons they have abroad. Suppose we have Mr. Coyne wait on us. He's from abroad, you know.

MRS. I. Splendid! I hear he's a delightful young man. (*To SALLIE.*) Please summon Mr. Coyne.

SALLIE. He's not to be summoned. He ain't down yet.

ROSIE. In the meantime, ladies, you might buy something from us. It wouldn't give you a headache.

MRS. H. Who said anything about *buying*, young woman!

MRS. I. No, we are merely *shopping*. Come, Dorothy.

MRS. H. Come along, Bobbie. (*Going L.*)

MRS. I. (*going L.*). We'll have a look at some of the other sections while we wait for Mr. Coyne.

(DOROTHY and BOBBIE *reluctantly leave the mussing up of articles and follow the women. They exeunt L., chattering ad lib.*)

SALLIE (*laughingly*). Well, wouldn't that blow your hat in the river!

ROSIE (*meaningly*). Thank goodness, my time here is extremely limited. (*Both busy themselves in straightening articles on counters.*)

SALLIE. I know what you mean, girlie. But you'd better sidetrack that idea of kidnapping Mr. Coyne. There ain't a chance in the world for you.

ROSIE (*loftily*). Oh, I don't know. What has been done can be done again, I guess.

SALLIE. No wedding bells for me, my dear. Marriage is like riding in an auto with a flat tire—you journey through life, but you bump all the way.

GUSSIE (*off R.*). Walk this way, please.

SALLIE. Oh, he's in again!

Enter GUSSIE, R., followed by GERTRUDE.

GERTRUDE (*to ROSIE and SALLIE*). Good morning. I am so glad to find you disengaged. (*To GUSSIE.*) Thank you for directing me. I shan't need you any further. (*GUSSIE smiles and exits R. GERTRUDE, to SALLIE, confidentially.*) You know, I'm going to be married—

SALLIE (*interrupting*). Are you quite sure you are?

GERTRUDE. Why, certainly.

SALLIE. Well I didn't know. (*With a meaning glance at ROSIE.*) Some folks only *think* they are. (*ROSIE grimaces.*)

GERTRUDE. I came in today to select my trousseau. I'm—I'm so very nervous I don't know what to do.

ROSIE. We're showing some awful nice things for brides this season—*awful* nice!

GERTRUDE. So I hear. I wanted mama to come, but she had a headache and I just couldn't put it off another day. So—by the way, is Mr. Coyne about? (*ROSIE and SALLIE grimace.*) I should *so* like to have him show me—I've heard so much about him, you see, that I would just love to—

SALLIE (*interrupting, wearily*). Yes, ma'am. But you'll

have to take your place in line. There's a lot of people ahead of you.

ROSIE (*sighing*). He's *so* popular!

GERTRUDE. Oh, I don't mind waiting. (*Produces shopping list.*) Let me see. You know, I made a list of everything. Isn't it awful the things one needs? Morning apparel, afternoon frocks, evening gowns, hats, shoes, slippers, gloves, lingerie—oh, I wonder if I've spelled lingerie correctly?

SALLIE. You'll find dictionaries in the book section—third floor.

GERTRUDE. I do wish mama had come with me. This is *such* hard work. I believe a cup of hot chocolate would cheer me up. Yes, I know it would. I'm so awfully nervous. Please page me when Mr. Coyne is at leisure. Thank you. (*Exits L.*)

SALLIE (*laughs*). Aren't we the popular little sales girls? We *nearly* sold something today.

ROSIE. I don't blame them for waiting for him. (*Rapturously.*) I'd wait all my life for him!

COYNE (*off R.*). All right. I'll see you after a bit. Come along, Smoke.

SALLIE (*to ROSIE*). Tell it to him, dearie. I'm going to lunch. (*Exits hurriedly L. ROSIE hesitates an instant, casting longing eyes at R., then follows SALLIE.*)

Enter COYNE, R., followed by SMOKE.

COYNE. My word; what I cawn't understand—what quite overcomes me is, why you hit that beastly telegraph pole. Answer me! Didn't you see the bally old pole?

SMOKE. Yes, sah; I seen it—*after* we hit it—*after*, sah!

COYNE. But I say, y' know, you told me you jolly well knew how to drive a car.

SMOKE. I does know how to drive a car. Yo' gotta admit we was goin' along jus' beautifully till we struck dat pole.

COYNE. By Jove, y' know I cawn't put up with this sort of thing. First you knock over a man and then you attack that pole. Didn't you see the man, either?

SMOKE. Sure thing I seen him. Dat was yo' fault I hit dat man.

COYNE. My fault? My word! No; it was not my fault. I said to you, "Smoke, give him the right of way."

SMOKE. Lordy, man! I thought yo' say, "Git him right away."

COYNE. You will have to be more careful, old Smoke. I cawn't have you scratching the paint off my car bumping into every strange man you meet, y' know.

SMOKE. Yes, sah. I expects de reason am because I ain't tasted food fo' several days now.

COYNE. Well, old top, you haven't missed anything. It's the same old taste.

SMOKE. Den again, it may be 'cause I ain't had no great amount of salary from yo' of late. I don't even remember like I git a tip from yo'.

COYNE. Now that's a bally libel. I nevah forget to tip you, old Smoke. And my tip is ten dollars or nothing.

SMOKE. Yes, sah; mostly nothing. I ain't complainin', sah, but if yo' ask me I nevah even see yo' tip yo' hat.

COYNE (*as the point slowly dawns upon him, laughs heartily and slaps SMOKE on the shoulder.*) Bah Jove, that's a beastly clever thing, Smoke—awfully so! I shall try and remember that one. Now let me see—ah, yes. I nevah even see you raise your hat. (*Repeats line to firmly plant it, then again laughs heartily.*)

SMOKE (*disgustedly*). And dey shot men like Lincoln and McKinley.

COYNE. That's a jolly pun, my word!

SMOKE. Den suppose yo' hand me some jolly money—yo' know I gotta live.

COYNE. Yaas, but do you consider it important that you live?

SMOKE. Yes, sah—it is to me—

COYNE. Now, Smoke, old top, permit me to inquire—I am curious to know what you did with the ten dollars I gave you yesterday. I gave you a ten dollar bill yesterday aftahnoon, did I not?

SMOKE. Yes, sah, I remember now yo' did, and I done spent it all.

COYNE. Ah, you acknowledge the fact, do you? Very good. Now you will please tell me how you spent ten dollars since yesterday aftahnoon.

SMOKE. Well, sah, I spent fo' dollahs fo' whiskey, three dollahs fo' gin and one dollah fo' cigarettes—

COYNE. Yes, yes; four for whiskey, three for gin and a dollar for cigarettes; that's nine dollars. What did you do with the other dollar?

SMOKE. Has you got to know dat?

COYNE. Yaas, what did you do with that other dollar?

SMOKE. Well, if yo' must know, I reckon I spent that other dollar foolishly.

Loud and excited talking is heard off R. and enter the four models, JOSIE, MABEL, ANGIE and FLOSSIE. They are attired in charming negligee costumes. They encircle COYNE, chattering industriously.

FOUR MODELS. Oh, Mr. Coyne, Miss Gottrox is in the store—she's to buy a complete trousseau—spend thousands—just to think she should select this store, etc., etc.

COYNE (*finally restoring order*). Now, now, my very deah young ladies, what is this bally old thing all about? No, no; don't talk—don't disturb yourselves. I gather that some young lady with money is within our midst, and is quite willing to release it on consideration that we supply her with a few articles of wearing apparel suitable to array her for her forthcoming nuptial ceremony. (*The girls pantomime conversation.*)

SMOKE (*aside*). By golly, and he told the girls not to talk.

COYNE. Very good, my very deah young ladies. We shall attempt to captivate the moneyed eyes of Miss Gertrude Gottrox, and suffer her to depart from our establishment with far less money than when she entered it. I suggest that you disappear forthwith to the privacy of your dressing parlor and don some fetching, bewitching and expensive finery calculated as best appropriate for the cere-

mony or ordeal that Miss Gottrox is shortly to undergo. Shoo! Begone! (*He shoos them off R.*)

SMOKE (*aside, gazing longingly after girls*). Oh, boy! Dat tall dark one!

COYNE. Now, Smoke, old top, if you are not exactly satisfied with your employment here, you may seek elsewhere for a position.

SMOKE (*still gazing in direction girls have gone*). And dat blonde lady—oh, oh!

COYNE. Did you heah me, old Smoke?

SMOKE. Yes, sah, de fust time I heard yo'. I'll *dare* yo' to discharge me. Say, yo' been cheatin' me, boss. I didn't know yo' had dem birds cooped up in here. Oh, where have I been all of their lives!

COYNE. Now, now, Smoke, remember you are black, and they—well, you nevah can be anything in their young lives.

SMOKE. Yes, I knows dat, boss; but yo' can't stop me from lookin'. I gotta a right to look, ain't I?

COYNE. No, not even look. They are not for you—entirely out of your class.

SMOKE. Look heah, boss. If I'm ridin' on a train second class and yo' is on de same train ridin' fust class, ain't I gotta right to admire the same scenery as yo'?

COYNE (*produces cigarette from case and taps end thoughtfully while his slow wits grasp the point*). Old Smoke, I can jolly well see where you are correct. Bah Jove, that's a ripping comparison—stupendously ripping! (*Searches pocket for match.*) Although I feel jolly sorry that you must ride “second class” and “view the scenery” all through life—

SMOKE. Oh, I don't mind. There's a whole lot of fellows in de same coach with me.

COYNE (*fails to find a match.*) I say, old Smoke, have you a match? (SMOKE *produces match*. COYNE *attempts to ignite it and fails.*) I say, that bally match is no good. It won't light.

SMOKE. Dat's funny. It lit all right dis mawnin'.

COYNE (*throws match disgustedly*). All right, old Smokie, I must stop this spoofing and attend to business. I suppose I shall have to be a blighter clerk, don't y' know, and have all sorts of vulgar persons ask me silly questions and all that sort of thing. My word!

SMOKE (*imitating COYNE*). Yaas, my word! (*Yawns in bored manner.*)

COYNE. In the meantime you might look about for a garage. You should jolly well have a garage for the car at night.

SMOKE (*retiring to R.*). We don't need no garage to put dat car in at night.

COYNE. And why should not my car be housed in a garage at night?

SMOKE. Because it's a runabout. (*Exits R.*)

(COYNE *struggles to absorb the point and fails, finally turns to millinery table, picks up a hat trimmed with long feather and altogether a screaming satire, dusts his clothing and shoes.*)

Enter from L., MRS. INJAM, MRS. HIGHTOWER and the children.

MRS. I. (*breathlessly*). Mr. Coyne? (*He bows ceremoniously.*) I am Mrs. Injam.

COYNE. I am quite sure I am deeply surprised.

MRS. H. And I am Mrs. Hightower. Haven't I seen you *somewhere*?

COYNE. It's possible, madam. I've been there quite frequently.

BOBBIE. Oh, mama, he's only got one glass eye. Papa has two.

DOROTHY. Ask him something else, mama. He talks so funny.

MRS. I. Hush, child, you will embarrass him. (*Suddenly discovers feathered hat in COYNE'S hand.*) Oh, Mr. Coyne, do let me see that hat! (*Takes hat, holds it up admiringly.*) Isn't that a dear?

MRS. H. Exquisite! So chic! Why, it has Paris written

all over it. Just what I've hunted the shops here for.
(*Reaches for hat.*)

MRS. I. (*withdrawing it*). You will excuse me, my dear Mrs. Hightower, but I discovered it first.

MRS. H. Oh, it wouldn't be at all becoming to you. You're much too old for a chic creation like that, you know.

MRS. I. (*frigidly*). Thank you. (*To COYNE.*) How much is this hat, Mr. Coyne?

COYNE. I don't know.

MRS. I. Don't know? Is it imported?

COYNE. I don't know.

MRS. H. It's a very late model, is it not?

COYNE. I don't know.

MRS. I. Haven't you any brains?

COYNE (*absent mindedly*). I don't know. (*Gives his attention to the children, pantomiming a playful conversation.*)

Enter GUSSIE, R.

MRS. H. (*appealing to GUSSIE*). Perhaps you can give us information regarding this hat.

GUSSIE (*gigglingly*). Really, you know, you flatter me. But isn't it a hat, though?

MRS. I. Now that's what I call real information. He tells us that it is a hat.

MRS. H. (*to GUSSIE*). What's the price of it?

GUSSIE (*looking hat over for price mark*). Why, really, there's no price on it. They must be giving it away. Te-hee! Te-hee!

Enter SALLIE and ROSIE, L. SALLIE goes back of counter, R., and ROSIE assumes pose for COYNE's benefit.

MRS. I. (*to COYNE*). Really, Mr. Coyne, this is a queer establishment. Nobody appears to know anything.

COYNE. Y' know, I believe you're jolly well right.

SALLIE (*to MRS. INJAM*). Oh! Were you looking at that hat? (*Comes down to her.*)

MRS. I. Humph! That really is a clever girl. She saw

at a glance that I was looking at this hat. Maybe *you* can tell me the price.

SALLIE. Yes, ma'am. Forty-five dollars.

MRS. H. (*gaspingly*). Forty-five dollars?

MRS. I. (*witheringly*). How ridiculously cheap.

COYNE (*to SALLIE*). You've made a mistake, Miss. Forty-five is merely for the hat. The feather is extra (*Mrs. Hightower gasps.*)

MRS. I. Oh, that's different. I thought the young woman didn't know what she was talking about. How much is the feather?

COYNE. That feather? Y' know that feather—did you ask me what it was—no, no; of course it's a feather. We all know it's a feather, so why discuss it further?

MRS. H. Is it a 1918 model creation?

SALLIE. No—nineteen seventeen. (*This bit is done as though they were bidders at an auction.*)

GUSSIE. Nineteen eighteen.

MRS. I. I say, nineteen seventeen.

MRS. H. Humph! Nineteen fifteen.

SALLIE. Nineteen seventeen—nineteen seventeen!

COYNE. And sold for nineteen seventeen. (*To MRS. INJAM.*) Any alterations you suggest in the bally old hat, Mrs. Injam?

MRS. I. No, I shall take it as it is.

MRS. H. No, it won't make any difference. She'll be back tomorrow to change it anyhow.

COYNE. Quite right. They all do. Anything else today, ladies, before I go to lunch?

MRS. I. (*produces bill and extends it to COYNE*). I don't know. I'll look around.

COYNE. I wish you would. I'm ashamed to take the money while you are looking at me.

MRS. I. (*putting bill in purse*). I've changed my mind. You may charge it. Come, children. I'll take you up to the animal section, and you may play with the cute little bear cubs.

COYNE (*to GUSSIE*). Direct them, Mr. Shanks ; but, mind you, don't let the children bite the baby elephant.

GUSSIE. Walk this way, please. (*GUSSIE, MRS. INJAM, MRS. HIGHTOWER and the children exeunt R. with much chattering and confusion.*)

COYNE (*to ROSIE and SALLIE*). Ah, good morning, girls. (*They smile their greeting.*) Y' know, bah Jove, I'm getting to be a regular business person—a jolly well salesman and all that sort of thing—

JOSIE (*interrupts*). Oh, Mr. Coyne. (*She is partly concealed by curtains or raised platform, and the curtains are draped artistically about her so that only her bare neck and shoulders and a silken-clad ankle are visible.*)

COYNE (*turning about, with monocle hastily raised to eye*). Hey? Bah Jove—what a vision ! What a potato—er, I mean, pippin !

JOSIE. I just wanted to tell you that we are preparing a demonstration for Miss Gottrox. Don't go away, will you? (*Disappears from view behind curtain.*)

COYNE. Go away? I should jolly well think not. (*To the girls, significantly.*) Ah, you may go to lunch now.

ROSIE (*haughtily*). We have been to lunch.

SALLIE (*laughingly*). But of course, if Josie—well, I know where a dollar buys the best lunch in town.

COYNE (*produces two or three bills*). You're a jolly clever feminine. Here you are—and don't hurry back. (*SALLIE takes money, grabs ROSIE and forcibly rushes her off R., COYNE following them with a self-satisfied expression and jaunty step.*)

Enter L., GERTRUDE and HUDSON.

GERTRUDE. I'm sure I left word to have Mr. Coyne notified I wished to see him just as soon as he came in.

HUDSON. So did I. (*Sighs and glances admiringly at her*). And so you are to be married. Ah, me, would that I were to be the happy man !

GERTRUDE (*laughs*). You? Why, Mr. Hudson, you forget the difference in our ages.

HUDSON. Yes, I know I may be old, but I have very young ideas. (*Sighs loudly.*) I suppose it's too late now.

GERTRUDE. Yes, quite. I am selecting my trousseau. But thus far I have been so disappointed in what I've seen. One should go abroad I really think to obtain genuine satisfaction.

HUDSON. Quite so, quite so, Miss Gottrox. I am of the healthy opinion that some women should go abroad and stay there. I know I felt that way regarding my wife.

GERTRUDE. I am surprised. I never knew you were married.

HUDSON. Oh, yes; but I don't go around bragging about it. We've been divorced five years.

GERTRUDE. Gracious! I do hope my affair doesn't terminate in a divorce court. You and your wife didn't get along well together, then?

HUDSON. No; the only time we ever went out together was when our gasoline stove exploded. (*GERTRUDE starts L.*) What? Going?

GERTRUDE. Yes, it just occurred to me that there were two or three articles on the second floor I had failed to price. (*Exits L.*)

HUDSON (*staring after her in admiration*). By George, but she's a heart breaker.

Enter COYNE, R.

COYNE. Oh, I say, and were you asking for me, don't y' know?

HUDSON (*whirling and facing COYNE*). Yes, and it's about time. Is the buyer in?

COYNE. No, the buyer's out of town, but the cellar's in the basement. (*Removes coat.*) Pretty hot day, isn't it?

HUDSON. Yes, it's hot; but what's pretty about it.

COYNE. Bah Jove, that's deucedly well put. I must remember that, y' know. Let me see. A chap says to me, or I say to chap, "Pretty hot day, isn't it?" Then I say to the chap, or the chap retaliates by saying, "Yes, it's hot, but what's *beautiful* about it?" (*Laughs.*)

HUDSON. You have a remarkable sense of wit. English, are you not? Traveled much?

COYNE. Jove, yes. Look at the mud on my shoes.

HUDSON. I suppose you are proud of being an Englishman?

COYNE. My word, yes.

HUDSON. What one thing did you English ever put over on this country? Tell me just one thing, sir.

COYNE. Well, old top, we have the flag we captured at Bunker Hill.

HUDSON. Yes, but we have Bunker Hill. Spoofing aside, show me a shirt.

COYNE. A shirt? Oh, yes, to be sure. A shirt, of course. (*Goes to counter and paws over goods.*) Strange. I'm jolly well positive I saw a shirt somewhere today. Perhaps I was wearing one. (*Discovers box of shirts.*) Ah, yes, here we are. Here we have a shirt. (*Takes shirt from box, holds it up for inspection.*) Beautiful shirt, isn't it?

HUDSON. Not bad. How much?

COYNE (*cons box for price mark, notes size of neckband and mistakes it for price mark*). Ah, yes; here we are. Seventeen.

HUDSON. Seventeen? Seventeen dollars for a shirt? Outrageous, sir! Seventeen dollars for one shirt.

COYNE. My word, it does seem a fabulous sum for a shirt, doesn't it?

HUDSON. I won't pay it.

COYNE. Bah Jove, I don't blame you. I wouldn't pay seventeen dollars for any blooming shirt I ever saw. But that's the price marked here. You can see for yourself. Seventeen. What? (*Displays figures on box.*)

HUDSON. Why, you fool, that's the size—the neckband size.

COYNE. My word, so it is; so it is.

HUDSON. It's my size all right. How much?

COYNE. Candidly I don't know. Suppose we say one pound.

HUDSON. You mean five dollars? Say. I can get a shirt like that at Kelly's for two-fifty.

COYNE. I dare say you're right. Why don't you go to Kelly's?

HUDSON. Because Kelly is out of them just now.

COYNE. Well, you come in here when I haven't got any and you can have one for two-fifty. Anything else I can show you today, old chap?

HUDSON. No; it's getting late. I'll come in again to-morrow morning.

COYNE. Quite right, old chap. Let it go till morning. Think it over tonight. Things always look different in the morning, I've heard. Personally, I don't know—I never get up till aftahnoon. (*Yawns in bored fashion.*)

Enter GERTRUDE, L.

GERTRUDE. Mr. Coyne?

COYNE. Yes, to be sure. Pardon me. (*Dons coat, smiles.*)

GERTRUDE. I am Miss Gottrox. I am to be married, you know.

COYNE (*with mock pathos*). My, my, what a pity! And so young, too. Is there no escape for you from this impending calamity?

GERTRUDE. But I do not wish to escape, sir.

HUDSON. By George, to marry her wouldn't be my idea of a calamity.

GERTRUDE (*to COYNE*). Besides, I have fully determined that you shall assist me in the selection of my trousseau.

COYNE. Oh, your trousseau—that's another matter. Um! Just where shall we begin? (*Glances helplessly about.*)

GERTRUDE (*just as helplessly*). I'm sure I haven't the least idea. I do wish mama had come with me.

HUDSON. Ah, have you a mother?

GERTRUDE. Surely.

COYNE. My word, of course she has a mother. The young lady here is a daughter on her mother's side. Now don't get nervous, Miss Gottrox; you may just spend all the money you wish. I shall bear up under the strain, y' know.

Enter ROSIE and SALLIE, R. They burst in excitedly.

ROSIE (*to COYNE, eagerly*). Everything is all ready for the trousseau display, Mr. Coyne.

SALLIE (*to ROSIE*). Yes, and that's the nearest you'll ever get to one—seeing it on some other girl.

COYNE (*to GERTRUDE, placing chair for her*). Be seated, please, and keep your eye on the curtained platform immediately in the rear—thank you—now look pleasant. We will demonstrate the different costumes with the aid of live models. Good idea—what?

GERTRUDE (*indicating HUDSON*). Is he—this gentleman—to remain?

HUDSON. Live models? I'll dare anybody to put me out.

Enter MRS. INJAM, MRS. HIGHTOWER, GUSSIE and the children, R. They group themselves back of GERTRUDE at L.

MRS. I. (*excitedly*). Oh, I just can't wait.

MRS. H. What a wonderful treat this will prove—providing they carry out the Parisian idea.

HUDSON. If they don't I'll call for a rain check.

COYNE. And now we are quite ready to begin. Hold tight, everybody!

(Orchestra breaks into a soft, pretty strain of music, COYNE claps his hands, all stage lights are entirely extinguished and then a strong spotlight is thrown on platform, the curtains are drawn, disclosing one of the girl models in stunning afternoon gown. She slowly turns around two or three times and then comes down steps, walks gracefully about stage to music's rhythm, then exits R. COYNE describes her costume in detail from the moment of her first appearance until her exit. All lights up at her exit, which is followed by an outburst of applause from the others.)

BOBBIE. Oh, mama, buy me that.

MRS. H. Perfectly exquisite.

MRS. I. Ah, they didn't have such clothes as that when I was a girl, did they, Mr. Coyne?

COYNE. Really, I cawn't say. However, I should imagine they had some sort of clothes or something to wear, y' know.

GERTRUDE. You may mark down that gown for me, Mr. Coyne.

HUDSON. Rather expensive, if I am any judge. Imagine a man dressing a wife in a gown like that.

COYNE. My dear chap, it isn't the original cost—it's the up-keep.

(COYNE claps his hands, all lights out, to music, spotlight is thrown on curtains and a second girl is disclosed, attired in evening gown. COYNE details her costume while she walks down steps, about stage and exits L. The curtains have been closed and are now drawn again, showing the third girl in a somewhat daring costume. She, too, indulges in the same business as the preceding models, to detail talk by COYNE, and exits R. Again the closed curtains open and the fourth girl is shown in a nifty bathing costume. Same business as other girls, but instead of exiting she goes R. and assumes effective pose. The other three models enter from L. and R. and also assume poses. Curtains are now closed and all lights up full.)

COYNE. Now, before we go any further, I wish to say that if any of you are inclined to be—ah, nervous, or—well, you have likely observed that each costume shown has been a little more daring than the preceding one, so I warn you that there is time for the timid or prudish ones to leave before we proceed further. What?

(There are cries of "Go ahead!" "Proceed!" "We are all with you," "Style is style," etc.)

HUDSON. Throw her into high speed. I wear shock absorbers.

(MRS. INJAM suddenly grabs the children and hustles them off L., then returns to her former place. COYNE claps his hands and at the signal the curtains part, disclosing SMOKE. He grins broadly and starts to imitate actions of one of the models. General consternation, to—

QUICK CURTAIN.

The Spark of Life

By HARRY L. NEWTON

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Fantastic comedy in 3 acts; 4 males, 4 females. Time, 2 hours. **Scenes:** 1 interior, 1 exterior. **Characters:** Herman Heinie, a German doll maker. Bud Barlow, a college youth. Tommy Tucker, the "darling child." Willard Peck, the mysterious stranger. Clarice, Bud's sweetheart. Toots Snodgrass, the housemaid. Mrs. Heinie, the old doll maker's second wife. Dora Mee, a neighbor's daughter.

SYNOPSIS

Act I.—Herman Heinie, the eccentric doll maker of Happy Hollow, searching for the Spark of Life with which to put the breath of life into his Masterpiece. Toots the maid of all work, who is afraid of work but knows how to extract a tip. "Ain't he just splen-did." The Mephistophelian plot which brings the doll to life. Everybody happy but not for long. The mysterious stranger "I beg your pardon." The dream comes true, but—

Act II.—In which Mrs. Heinie falls in love with the devil, and the road of true love has many twists and turns. The mysterious stranger who will not "stay put." A new recipe for Angel Food, spoiled by too many cooks. The Masterpiece disappears. Sixes and sevens. "I'll paint my face and be a real lady."

Act III.—"Everybody hates everybody they shouldn't and everybody loves everybody they shouldn't." Bud, the cause of it all, as popular as an Indian with the smallpox. The deception disclosed. Herman turns over a new leaf. "I bought a new pair of trousers yesterday and by golly I'm going to wear them from now on. The worm turns, back to the kitchen where you belong. The fifty thousand dollar legacy sacrificed for love. A triple courtship. "All my life I've been searching for the Spark of Life and now at last I've found it—it's love, that's what it is, love." "Ain't he just splen-did."

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Si and I, 15 min.	1	
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